

Submitter: Dez Pebenito

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

My name is Dez, and I am a People's Farmers' Market community member from Montavilla. I am writing to strongly support HB 2979, and urge continued investment in Oregon's farmers markets, which serve as critical infrastructure for local economies, small farms, and food access programs.

The Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant Fund and SNAP support grants have been lifelines, helping markets upgrade infrastructure, implement cooling and smoke mitigation strategies, and expand SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks programs. But demand far exceeds available funding—grant requests would have required more than double the resources OFMA has to distribute. Without renewed investment, farmers markets will struggle to continue serving their communities.

These programs impact me personally because:

- without Snap Benefits like double up good bucks I wouldn't be able to get high quality organic food on a weekly basis. I'm a medical student and the school costs are very high, I don't have time to get a second job outside my workstudy job and these benefits alleviate the stress of my life by a lot.
- I get more than half my food at the local farmers market and the other half at local cooperatives because it's so important to me to not only support my community and local farms but also because I believe eating local organic foods is imperative to health and wellbeing. I am studying medicine at this moment and so I feel the focus of my life depends on healthy alive and living food that comes directly from farms to my kitchen. I believe that having the option to buy organic food that is affordable is imperative to my health and that buying local food is equally important to keeping autonomy as a citizen and consumer.

OFMA and Farmers Market Fund can leverage state funds to match federal funding, strengthening our farmers markets and local food systems. We cannot afford to fall behind. Please support HB 2979 to keep our markets strong, our farmers supported, and our communities fed.

Thank you,

Dez

PEOPLE'S FARMERS' MARKET